

FEB 18 1965

Dynamite Plot—'The Work Of Screwballs,' Capital Says

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WASHINGTON.

"The Great Dynamite Plot" to blow up the Statue of Liberty, the Washington Monument and the Liberty Bell was "simply the work of a bunch of screwballs," a high law enforcement official said yesterday.

Because at least two of the four arrested plotters had links with Fidel Castro's Cuba, the implication arose that possibly the bizarre bombing scheme had been made in Havana.

But the same official pointedly stressed that the weird plan of Robert Steele Collier and the ultra-extremist Black Nationalist Front had absolutely no known connection with any "International Communist conspiracy" or any hint of Havana direction. Nor, said the official, were there any signs that the plotters were either clever or skillful enough to ever pull off the bombings undetected.

That the Black Liberation

REDS AND CUBA ARE ABSOLVED

Front was and still is merely a collection of what one Federal official called "political maniacs" might be emphasized by the group's actions last year in Cuba.

DEFIANCE

In July and August 1964, Collier was among the 84 U. S. students who visited Cuba in defiance of the State Department travel ban. It was upon the students' return from Cuba on Aug. 14 that the "Negroes in the group (one was a girl) announced the formation of the Black Liberation Front.

The creation of the BLF was considered an ill omen even by the Negroes' fellow white students. For in Cuba, the Negroes were regarded by both the Cubans, and virtually

all of the Leftist U. S. students, as "too nuts to talk to."

At least twice, some of the Negroes beat up several white students "to show them the kind of rotten treatment we get in the United States." The Negroes claimed that the white Leftists were "too soft" and "played a big game but were really frauds" when it came to civil rights and similar Negro issues.

Several members of what was to become the BLF insisted that the "Negro Communists are going to take over the United States" and it was made clear that terrorism was the method they intended to use to go about it.

Ever since the creation of the 11-member BLF, however, the FBI and local police have kept a sharp eye on each member. So have other Federal investigation agencies.

"This was the work of rank amateurs," said one expert, "and besides their bad security it's lucky they didn't kill themselves fooling around with that dynamite." The 24 sticks of dynamite smuggled across the U. S.-Canadian border by French-Canadian Michelle Duclos, 26, was, said the police, "well crystallized."

In a crystallized condition, dynamite is extremely unstable and, said one expert, "could have blown up if they looked cross-eyed at it. That it didn't is a miracle."

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